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Voyages

that have been attempted to discover a

Northern Passage

to the

Pacific Ocean

Compiled by J. Wyld
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Printed from Stone
in the
Quarter Master Generals Office, Horse Guards
1818.

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The practicability of a Passage to the East Indies by the North Pole, has engaged the attention of the most celebrated Navigators from a very early period as will be seen from the following Sketch:—

The first attempt on record was made in the Year 1497 by Giovanni Gabato, a Venetian, who had received a Commission from Henry VII in 1495: In this Voyage he discovered Newfoundland.——

1500. Corte de Real, a Portuguese Captain, in search of a NW Passage, discovered Labradore.—

1564. One of the Ships belonging to the King of Denmark, that had wintered in Iceland was sent by the Governor in the North; they were prevented proceeding far on account of the Ice.—

1576.— Martin Frobisher in three Voyages, made several discoveries
1577 of Bays, Straits, Islands, and Capes.— The first land he ap-
1578. proached on the Coast, was a Cape, which he called Queen Elizabeth Foreland.— In coasting Northward he discovered the Strait which bears his name.— He prosecuted his search for a Passage into the Western Ocean, till he was prevented by Ice, and then returned to England.—

1585.— John Davies, an experienced Navigator, visited the Western
1586 Coast of Greenland, and explored the narrow Sea called Davis's
1587 Strait.— On another Voyage he proceeded as far North as the Island of Disko, and the opposite Shores of Greenland which he named London Coast.— He also discovered Cumberland Strait and upon the whole, the three Voyages of this Navigator are of great consequence.— His furthest point of discovery appears to have been Sanderson's Hope, Lat: 72° whence turning to the West he was impeded by Fields of Ice.—

1593.— Captain Weymouth sailed from England on the 2d May with

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with two Ships; the 18: June he saw Ice, and the Southernmost part of Greenland. He sailed as high as 63°35' N. Latitude in Davis' Strait: The Severity of the Weather, & Mutinous Conduct of the Crew hastened his return home.

1596. The City of Amsterdam fitted out two Ships under the Command of Hemskerk and Rypt. On the 9th June they discovered Bear Island. October 2nd they landed at Spitzbergen where they wintered.

1606. John Knight was appointed to conduct a Voyage of discovery by the Russia & East India Companies; his Ship was much injured in a Storm, and Knight perished on the Coast of Labrador.

1607 Hudson made his first Voyage, and is said to have proceeded along the Eastern Coast of Greenland as far as Lat: 82° but probably not above Lat: 80° or the furthest extremities of Spitzbergen.

1608. James Hall had already been out three Years successively viz: from 1605 to 1607 in the Danish Service on Voyages of discovery in the Northern parts, and in this fourth Voyage he was killed by a Gr[illegible]nder at a place called Rommels-Fiord on the 22d July.

1609. A Ship called the Amity fitted out by the Russia Company and commanded by Jonas Poole was sent on a Voyage to Cherry Island and also to make discoveries towards the North Pole. Poole sailed from Blackwall on the 1st March, and after enduring very severe cold and stormy Weather, discovered the Southern part of Spitzbergen on the 16th May having made two useless attempts to get beyond 79°50 N. Latitude: the Ice obliged him to return, and look out for fish in order to pay the Expence of the Voyage.

1610. Hudson, was again sent out by the Russia Company;

On

On this Voyage he discovered the Straits which bear his Name and that inland Sea nearly equal to the Baltic in size which has been called Hudson's Bay.— This Voyage cost Hudson and the few people who were with him, their lives.—

1611.— Captain Pole was again employed in a small Vessel called the Elizabeth, but after surmounting numberless difficulties, and penetrating to 80° N. Latitude, he lost his Ship at Spitzbergen.—

1612 Captain Thos. Button sailed in Company with Captain Ingram the highest Latitude to which Buttons researches extended was about 65 degrees.—

1614.— The same Society which had promoted Button's, & so many former Voyages, sent on the same Errand, Capt. Gibbons in the Discovery, the very same Ship in which Button had made his Voyage but he was scarcely arrived at the Mouth of Hudson's Strait, when a large quantity of Ice encompassed him, and he was carried by the force of the Current, and the Winds into a Bay on the Coast of Labradore in 58° 30' N. Latitude.— Here Gibbons was obliged to remain for the space of 10 Weeks when the Season being now so far advanced, he returned to England.—

1614.— The same Year Fotherby & Baffin were sent out with a single Ship by the Russia Company.— With much difficulty they got with their Boats to the firm Ice which joined to Red Beach, Spitzbergen.— They sailed from Cape Barren NE. by E. 8 leagues when they met with Ice lying East by South, & West by North.—

1615 Fotherby was again sent out to the North in the Pinnace Richard.— He could not get further this, than the preceding Year.—

1615 Some public spirited Gentlemen sent Capt. Bylot to attempt a
1616 N.W. Passage.— Will.m Baffin sailed with him as Pilot, and in this Voyage they discovered several Bays & Coasts, all of them totally unknown to any preceding Navigator.—

1619.

1619. Jon. Munck sailed from the Sound May 16th passed through Hudson's Strait, put into Churchill's River, when out of 64 Persons of which his Crew originally consisted only 3 returned to Denmark.—

So many unsuccessful Voyages seem to have prevented the prosecution of any further attempts to discover a N.W. Passage for a long period of time.— Some obscure mention is however made of a Voyage by Captain Wm. Hawtridge; this is the same person who accompanied Sir Thos. Button in his Voyage of discovery, but it is entirely unknown in what Year this Voyage took place, though most probably it was subsequent to that of Bylot in 1616.—

1631.— Captain Lucas Fox set sail from Deptford on the 5th May, in H. M. Ship Charles of 80 Tons.— When off Cape Chidley, the heat of the Sun was so great that the Pitch on the sides of the Ship began to melt: When near Nottingham Island he observed that the Needle had lost its power.— Fox went only to Lat: 55° 13' in Davis Strait.—

1631 Captain James set sail from Bristol on the 3rd May.— On the 4th June he came within sight of Greenland.— On the 17: he saw the Island of Resolution. At this juncture the motion of the Needle was impeded. A strong current set into Hudson's Strait, the sails & rigging of the Ship were frozen.— Having worked through Hudson's Strait, he steered to the Western Shore of Hudson's Bay his Ship having two or three times struck on the Shoals, he ran her aground on Charleton Island in James' Bay in N. Lat: 52° 3' where he remained 'till July 2nd 1632 when he returned to England

1643 By Order of the Dutch East India Company, Two Ships sailed from the Island of Ternate (principal of the Moluccas) to explore the Route from Japan, northward.— they reached only to 47° N. Lat:

1676 Captain John Wood sailed from the Nore, May 28th with two Ships, the Speedwell & Prosperous; On the 29th June, the Speedwell struck on some sunken Rocks off the Coast of Nova Zembla

in 74° 30 N. Latitude, 63° E. Longitude.— They saved only a small quantity of provision, & a few Tools.— On the 8. July they were relieved from their perilous situation by the Prosperous.—

1720. The Hudson's Bay Company sent out Messrs Knight & Barlow in a Sloop, but these unfortunate People were never more heard of.— M.r Scroggs who sailed in search of them, in 1722 only brought back proofs of their Shipwreck, but no fresh intelligence about a N.W. Passage.— They also sent a Sloop and Shallop to try for this discovery in 1737 but to no purpose.—

1741. Two Voyages for discovering a N.W. Passage through Hudson's Bay
1742 were performed in the Reign of George the 2nd, one under the command of Capt.n Middleton in H.M. Ship the Furnace, and the Discovery,
1746 Pink.— The other under the direction of Captains Smith, & Moore
1747 in the Ships Dobbs, & California fitted out by subscription.—

1761. Captain Christopher sailed from Fort Churchill in the Sloop Churchill he sailed up Chesterfield Inlet through which a Passage had been so generally expected: He found it only a River

1762. Christopher repeated the Voyage the following summer in Company with another Sloop commanded by M.r Norton; but without any success.—

1773.— The Race-horse and Carcass Bombs were fitted out for the purpose of trying how far Navigation was practicable towards the North Pole.— The Command of the Expedition was given to Capt.n Phipps (Lord Mulgrave) He forced his way on the 1st August to 80° 37' N. Lat: but could not proceed farther as he was there opposed by one continued Plain of smooth unbroken Ice bounded by the horizon.—

1776. A Voyage was undertaken for the discovery of a Passage to the Northward between Asia and America under the direction of Capts Cooke and Clerke.— Cooke ranged along the Coast of America as far as 70° 45' N. Latitude & 198° E. Longitude from Greenwich when he found himself entirely surrounded by the Ice, & prevented from either

either proceeding farther on to the Northward, or even following the course of the Coast; for the Ice closed almost every where on a low desert point of Land which from this circumstance he called, Icy Cape.—

At this period the Board of Admiralty sent Lieutenant Pickersgill in the Brig Lyon to Davis' Strait in order to try also, on that side how far it might be possible to discover a Passage.— On the 7th July he was off Cape Farewell, & on the 12th off Cape Desolation.— He now ranged along the Coast of Greenland; On the 17th he entered an Inlet which he named Muskito Cove, on the 4th of August at Midnight he was in 68° 14' N. Latitude, & 58° 50' W. Longitude, and saw every where great Quantities of Ice which made him tack about and stand to the Southward.—

1777. The following Year, Lieutenant Young was sent on the same discovery, and came back without having discovered a Passage, or any thing like it.—

1818.— Four Merchant Vessels have been hired, and rendered as strong as Wood and Iron can make them.— Their Names are, the Isabella, the Alexander, the Dorothea and the Trent;— the first two, being intended to proceed up Davis' Strait, under the Command of Capt. Ross;— the two latter, by the Route of the North Pole under Capt. Buchan; and all four are to make the best of their way to Berings Strait.— The Alexander & Trent are two smaller Vessels, the first, commanded by Lieut. Parry; the latter by Lieut. Franklin.—

The Russians have for some time been strongly impressed with the idea of an open Passage round America, and the Kamtschatka Frigate, commanded by Capt. Golovnin, who was a Prisoner in Japan has proceeded on the same discovery at the public Expence, which Lieut. Kotzebue is employed on, by the private liberality of Count Romanzoff.—